

The Tall Tree Newsletter

of the PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

January 2015 Volume 38, No 4

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC * REFRESHMENTS SERVED

GENERAL MEETING

Sunday, January 25, 2:00-4:00 PM

Lucie Stern Community Center

1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

Facilitated by Mark Weiss

PAHA's Public Meetings

GENERAL PROGRAM MEETINGS

are held monthly

2:00-4:00 PM

October - May

at the

Lucie Stern Community Center

1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

PAHA'S PUBLIC MEETINGS 2015

Sunday, January 25

"Palo Alto Jazz"

Facilitated by: Mark Weiss

PAHA'S MEETING DATES 2015

March 1

April 12

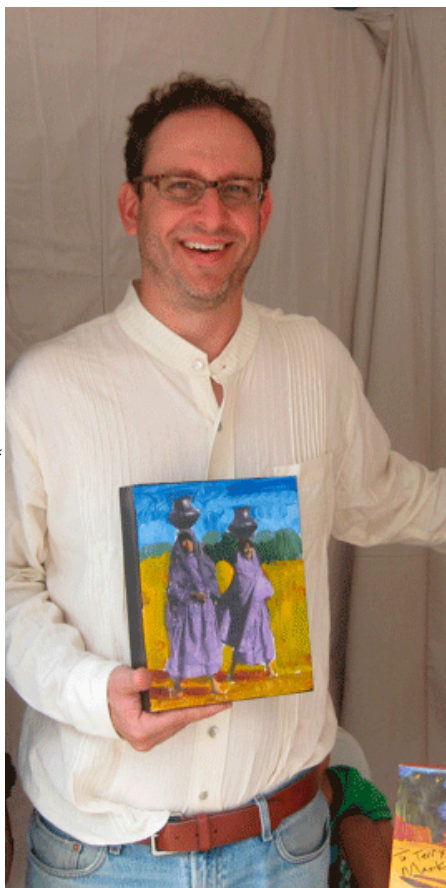
May 10

June: Annual Dinner, date and location to be determined.

The Palo Alto

Jazz

Quintessence



PAHA members and guests are in for a real treat on January 25! Mark Weiss will facilitate a conversation, "The Palo Alto/Jazz Quintessence," on the history of jazz in Palo Alto and Palo Alto's role in the history and development of jazz. Joining him on his panel will be jazz drummer, Akira Tana, and perhaps additional local jazz aficionados. Mark has commented, "...you cannot really get Palo Alto unless you get its jazz stories." Mark Weiss graduated from Gunn (as did Akira Tana,) is a concert promoter and manager at Earthwise Productions, and author of the blog, "Plastic Alto." Over the course of his career, Mark has produced numerous concerts. Prepare yourself for a rich, interactive experience, which, Mark Weiss hopes, will include audience participation and anecdotes. Perhaps you are or know someone who wanted to pursue a career in jazz but had to hold down a "day job" as an engineer, professor, doctor, banker. Bring your story about jazz in Palo Alto to the January meeting.

Mark Weiss, facilitator for the Jazz Quintessence program. (Photo from Mark Weiss)

A Question of Relevance

FROM THE
PRESIDENT
Ralph Britton

PAHA HAS BEEN CONNECTING PALO ALTANS WITH THEIR RICH history for over 100 years. Many of our current residents have lived in the city for much of their lives and are strongly connected with its recent and more distant past. Several of our Board members are graduates of Palo Alto High School. This connection to the past is also reflected in the average age of our membership.

Now there is a perceptible shift in our population as young people successful in tech industries come from various parts of the country and a large number of people from Asia are attracted to our schools and professional opportunities. While their history may extend for millennia, it is very different from our local tradition. The challenge is somehow to demonstrate to these newcomers to our community the value of their developing an understanding of our history and traditions while respecting the strong historic culture that they bring with them. The Palo Alto Library, for example, is doing much to make their facilities relevant to these new residents, offering publications in their native languages and culturally relevant programs.

Our challenge is to bring people from these communities into our membership and invite their participation in our organization. Newcomers are now members of the community. The schools that they find so attractive are the result of a long commitment by our community to their development. Other examples of historic community resources abound; thus local history has relevance. As many of them become long-term residents, our history will become their history as well. In the meantime, our programs and activities need to be of interest to a majority of our changing community. I welcome reader's comments as to how this might be achieved.

PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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Welcome Myron Freedman

THE PROPOSED PALO ALTO HISTORY MUSEUM, WORKING TO DEVELOP EXHIBITS and programs at the former Roth Building on Homer Avenue, has hired Myron as its first full time Executive Director. He has impressive experience, most recently as Executive Director of the Museum of Ventura County, and before that of the Hayward Area Historical Society, where he led development of their new Center for History and Culture. Myron has worked in all aspects of museum operation, such as curator, director, and designer of exhibits in numerous history centers. His having been Artistic Director of the Chicago Shakespeare Company adds drama to his credentials. He can be reached at myronfreedman@paloaltohistorymuseum.org.

—Rich Green, *President of the Palo Alto History Museum*

An Award and 'Thanks' to Harriette Shakes

At a festive December PAHA board party at Larry Christenson's home, Harriette Shakes was unaware that she was the honored guest, when she became the second recipient of the Gloria Brown Award "for exceptional service."

A professional graphic artist, Harriette began designing the *Tall Tree* five years before joining the board in 2011, and two years later became Vice President and a member of the Executive Committee. As chair of Publications, she has been the leader for the books *Palo Alto Remembered* and the revision of *Lucie Stern*. She oversaw the expanded *Centennial Tall Tree* issue and shared leadership with Larry Christenson of PAHA's 100th Year activities.

She created the www.paloaltoremembered.com website, and together with Brian George, mounted the City Hall centennial display. She guided the successful appeal to the *Palo Alto Weekly's* holiday fund for \$5,000 in support of PAHA's "Out of the File Cabinet into the Classroom" project which brought four high-school interns into the archives to gather materials for third graders to study.

Graduating from UCLA with a background in art, literature and history, Harriette pursued an elementary teaching credential, and came to Palo Alto in 1970 to teach. After retiring from a career in education, she returned to art studies and eventually began her own graphics business. Her husband, Joe Shakes, is a former PAHA board member who served as program chair.

—by Betty Gerard



The Gloria Brown Award

Palo Alto and Camp Curry Connections

RECENT NEWSPAPER STORIES SUGGEST THAT THE next battle in Yosemite could be over naming rights to park landmarks. We are familiar with corporations buying naming rights to stadiums such as Levi Stadium or AT&T Ballpark, but in Yosemite it is the concessionaire claiming that they “own” the rights to names of well-known park landmarks such as the Ahwahnee Hotel and Camp Curry; and if they do not receive their park concession renewals, the new concessionaires will be expected to buy these names from them, with costs expected to be in the millions of dollars.

This issue reminded me of the connection between Palo Alto and Yosemite. David and Jennie Curry, the original operators of Camp Curry, were long-time residents of Palo Alto and the family connection to both Yosemite and Palo Alto was multi-generational.

David Curry and Jennie Foster had been students of David Starr Jordan at Indiana University where they both took a geology class from Jordan. As a couple they both became teachers, and during summer vacations would lead groups on nature tours to places such as Yellowstone National Park. By the late 1890s they were in California, lured by Jordan’s presence at Stanford and the wonders of the Yosemite Valley. David Curry was the first principal of the newly established Sequoia High School in Redwood City. In the summer of 1899 they established the first Camp Curry in Yosemite.

The skills and personalities of the couple allowed the business to thrive. He abandoned his teaching career to devote his considerable energies to building the Camp Curry business. But they also needed income for the off-season, so they bought ½ interest in a furniture store at 336 University Avenue, and the family moved into a home at 349 Hamilton Avenue. Eventually the Camp Curry operation grew into a full-time business and the furniture store was sold.

The Bank of Palo Alto and its president George Parkinson were strong supporters of the Camp Curry concern, providing loans to develop the facility. Stanford (and Berkeley) students were hired to work their summers in Yosemite, providing a workforce that interacted with visitors quite well. The two Curry daughters both married Stanford students who worked summers in Yosemite. Mary Curry married Donald Tresidder, who would go on to become the President of Stanford University, using the skills he developed at Camp Curry to manage the university.

Eventually the family gave up the Camp Curry operation, and today it is run by a large corporation who values the Curry name to the tune of millions of dollars.

An early Camp Curry promotional flyer

In Memoriam Gloria Brown

Gloria, who died December 31 in Palo Alto, cared deeply about Palo Alto history and made essential contributions to the *Centennial History of Palo Alto* published in 1993. When the *Palo Alto Times* announced its closing, she quickly retrieved photos from them for that book.

As the daughter of a photographer, she had similar talents. She facilitated the showing of his pictures in San Francisco Chinatown of that place in the early 1900s. Judy Leahy remembers working with Gloria and others to make copies of excerpts about life in Palo Alto from around 1905 to 1913 from letters by Mrs. Tobey to her brother in Massachusetts. She also cared about local politics, assisting several Republican candidates for City Council. —from *Beth Bunnenberg*

**CAMP CURRY
YOSEMITE**

**CAMP CURRY
YOSEMITE**

CAPACITY 500 GUESTS

THE BEST EQUIPPED CAMP ON EARTH

ENTRANCE TO CAMP CURRY

FOR YOUR SUMMER OUTING

MAKE CAMP CURRY YOUR DESTINATION

CIRCULARS IN ALL RAILROAD OFFICES AND IN PECK-JUDAH CABINETS IN ALL FIRST-CLASS HOTELS ON THE PACIFIC COAST.

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History Jaunts

Palo Alto Art Center's current exhibit on view through April 12, Hear This, presents works of five contemporary artists who employ the power of sound in artworks that explore perception, the passage of time, and nostalgia. Drop-in programs in mixed media, drawing, figure painting, and collage make available independent work in the company of other artists to build community and share ideas. PAAC is located at 1313 Newell Rd, call or email for hours: 650.329.2366 or www.cityofpaloalto.org/artcenter.

San Mateo County History Museum's art exhibit, on view in the first floor rotunda until May, features paintings relevant to Bay Area history by Fleur Spolidor. One reminds us that the stones and style of the San Carlos train station are closely connected to Stanford University. Others explore means of transportation from steam train to auto to airplane to the new concept of baby bullet trains. For more information, check the museum website or phone: 650.299.0104 or www.historysmc.org

Museum of American Heritage exhibit, A to Z, will be on display until March 15. By accessing their collection of roughly 5,000 historic electrical and mechanical inventions, MOAH shows a variety of unrelated artifacts in alphabetical order from A (abacus) to Z (zapper). The exhibit includes antique medical devices, typewriters, extraordinary cooking devices, and more that represents the breadth of the museum's collection. Free admission, open Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays 11 to 4:00 pm. 321 Homer Ave. Palo Alto, 650.321.1004.



Ming's Will Be Back

Ming's restaurant on Embarcadero first opened in 1956 on El Camino. An article in the San Jose Mercury called it "the destination for families hosting special occasions, Stanford staff and student gatherings, and pre-Silicon Valley meetings." For PAHA, Ming's has additional significance in that its manager and owner, Vicki Ching, was one of our board members. She plans to raze the present building and redevelop it as an extended-stay hotel with restaurant.

Become a Member of PAHA

We invite you to become a member of the Association and join those who care about Palo Alto and enjoy learning about its history. Your dues make our work possible: we maintain the archives, assist researchers, and disseminate historical information through our publications and public programs. Your generosity will be appreciated for generations to come. Join today!

Individual \$25 Family \$40
Sustaining \$60 Business/Sponsor \$100 Life \$350

Make check payable to PAHA and mail to: PAHA Box 193, Palo Alto, CA 94302. Or join online at pahistory.org. Let us know if you wish to volunteer for a PAHA committee. (Note: current members will receive renewal notices in November.)



The Tall Tree is published eight times a year by the
PALO ALTO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION
*Our mission is to collect, preserve and make
available to the public information
about the history of Palo Alto.*



Jeanne McDonnell, Peggy McKee,
Mary Beth Cebedo Lefebvre, *Editors*
Harriette Shakes, *Design*
Omega Printing, *Printing*

Welcome to New Members
Carl & Susan Thomsen
Family Membership

Heritage Program on Channel 30

The Heritage Program for January will be PAHA's December program, "Palo Alto Vignettes." The February program will be the PAHA November meeting, "Out of the File Cabinet Into the Classroom."
Wednesdays: 8 PM
Thursdays: 10:30 AM
Saturdays: 1 PM

DVDs of previous programs can be borrowed at the Archives which are temporarily located at Cubberley, Room K-7. Hours:
Tuesdays, 4-8 PM
Thursdays, 1-5 PM

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